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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Paris Riots President Bush to
Latin America Iraq - Saddam Trial - Oil For Food
PARIS - Monday, November 07, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Paris Riots
President Bush to Latin America
Iraq - Saddam Trial - Oil For Food

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Once again the spreading suburban violence makes every front page today, including in the regional press, with such titles as "The Worrisome Spread" (Le Figaro) or "How Long Is This Going to Last?" (Le Parisien). Sunday's Le Journal du Dimanche headlines: "How to Stop the Violence." But several headlines are devoted to President Chirac's short press conference yesterday evening after a special ministerial meeting on security. While La Tribune states: "Chirac Takes Over" many question his "empty words" and lack of concrete measures: "Chirac Asks for Order, And Then What?" headlines France Soir. Liberation comments on its front page: "the government appears to be impotent." Catholic La Croix devotes its lead to "Religions and the Suburbs." The Figaro editorial concentrates on the foreign media's perspective with special emphasis on the U.S. media "which compares Paris to Baghdad." This morning France 2 television gave a media review of European cover stories devoted to the riots with commentaries on "the possibility of riots spreading to other European cities after having ignited regional French areas." (See Part C) PM Villepin is scheduled to speak this evening on TF1 television during the prime time 8 PM news broadcast. Interior Minister Sarkozy pens an op-ed in Le Monde where he asserts that "the nation's strategy is the right one. The police's role is to re-establish order. If it didn't do its job, what would happen? Extremism and various mafias would take over." Saturday's Le Figaro carries an op-ed by Georges Fenech of the National Assembly praising "New York's zero tolerance" for delinquents.

International stories concentrate on President Bush's Latin American tour. For Le Figaro "Bush Fails to Charm Latin America." (See Part C)

Le Figaro carries an op-ed by Adrien Jaulmes titled "In an Iraq in Disarray, Saddam Trial Fails" while Le Monde devotes a full page to the French companies implicated in the 'Oil for Food' scandal, a story also reported in Liberation and La Croix. (See Part C)

La Croix carries an op-ed on cultural diversity which asks: "Between the WTO and UNESCO, which institution and which preoccupations, cultural or economic, will prevail?"

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Paris Riots

"France Accused"

Yves Threard in right-of-center Le Figaro (11/07): "Is Paris Burning? The U.S. press does not hesitate to compare Paris to Baghdad and its suburbs to the Gaza strip. Either the concern is sincere and we should be grateful, or the opportunity was too good to be missed to criticize the country of human rights always eager to give lessons. While there is probably a little bit of both, the second guess is most certainly the right one. France is paying today for its arrogance. The Americans will never forget the less than flattering words used to qualify America and its society at the start of the war in Iraq and after Katrina. But the fact is that France has failed its forty-year old immigration policy."

"A Waste"

Jean-Michel Helvig in left-of-center Liberation (11/07): "If it became apparent that the state could not ensure public order, individual solutions could spread. While Sarkozy has made things worse through his choice of words, it would be a vain victory to use him as scapegoat. What is becoming obvious with each day that passes is the incredible waste of a

domestic security policy which is the hostage of electoral demagoguery. What this country needs is continuity in its domestic security policy. Why is it impossible to have on a domestic level what we already have at the national level?"

"An Affair of State"

Francois-Xavier Pietri in centrist La Tribune (11/07):

"Suburban unrest has become an affair of state. By calling a cabinet meeting on security, President Chirac is taking over an affair that may turn out to be the most serious crisis of his presidency. During the past eleven days, PM Villepin has given the impression of always being one step behind, caught in his rivalry with Sarkozy, but also never offering concrete solutions. The political class is as always unable to deal with the social and economic reality of the suburbs. And this is what the foreign media has been picking up. When faced with these shadow warriors, each of our successive governments has indeed given up. What used to be contained in closed areas has now exploded, with possible collateral damage for France's domestic policy as well as its image abroad."

"Choosing Between Modesty and Ambition"

Left-of-center Le Monde in its editorial (11/07): "The explosion of suburban violence and its causes are so complex that all theories have a little bit of truth in them. The brutal intrusion of reality in the presidential pre-campaign with its more than twenty potential candidates is turning our political life into a vaudeville. If we want to avoid what happened in 2002 with Le Pen in the runoff, it is high time our politicians turn their backs on politics as a spectacle and begin to think about concrete solutions for France's society."

President Bush to Latin America

"Bush Fails to Charm Latin America"

Lamia Oualalou in right-of-center Le Figaro (11/07):

"President Bush's welcome in Brazil was glacial. This has become a habit for the President. But the situation was all the more difficult to swallow because President Bush left the Summit of the Americas practically empty handed. The stakes were high for a President whose popularity ratings are at their lowest."

Iraq - Saddam Trial - Oil For Food

"Iraq in Disarray, Saddam Trial A Failure"

Adrien Jaulmes in right-of-center Le Figaro (11/07): "The crimes retained against Saddam have not convinced Iraqi public opinion, nor the Arab world in general. Saddam's televised appearance did not elicit the disgust expected. The organization of the trial is perceived by Iraqi public opinion as a permanent reminder of the U.S. presence and the Iraqi government's weakness. Finally the special tribunal satisfies no one: not the Shiites, the Sunnis or the Kurds."

"Privileges and Corruption"

Philippe Boloignon in left-of-center Le Monde (11/07): "French companies are not the only ones implicated by the Volker report. But France, considered to be 'a friend' of the Iraqi regime, enjoyed certain privileges. After Russia and Egypt, France's companies were the biggest beneficiaries of the 'oil for food' program. Still, out of the 440 French companies that participated in the program, only 180 are being accused of having paid bribes. Among those, several are foreign companies with branches in France and taking advantage of the 'special French relationship' with the Iraqi regime." STAPLETON